

REMARKS

Pending Claims

By this amendment, claims 1-46 are cancelled, and claims 47-61 are added. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the above amendments and consideration of the following remarks.

Claim Rejections

All claims rejected in the prior Office Action are hereby cancelled, rendering those rejections moot. Applicants submit that the prior art of record does not teach or suggest the subject matter of new claims 47-61. For example, the prior art of record, taken alone or in combination, does not teach or suggest:

A retractable ramp system comprising:
a frame including longitudinal guide members;
a carriage extending laterally between and longitudinally moveable along the guide members;
a ramp pivotably coupled to the carriage and movable between stowed and deployed positions;
a motor coupled to the frame;
a drive assembly coupled to the motor and including a drive pulley, a drive member driven by the drive pulley and coupled to the carriage, and a release assembly for engaging and disengaging the drive pulley and the motor, the motor operable to move the ramp between the stowed and deployed positions when engaged with the drive pulley;
a manual control assembly including a bearing block moveable under manual control along one of the guide members to deploy the ramp when the motor and the drive pulley are disengaged.

Furthermore, the prior art of record, taken alone or in combination, also does not teach or suggest:

A retractable ramp system comprising:

- a frame including longitudinal guide members;
- a carriage extending laterally between and longitudinally moveable along the guide members;
- a motor operable to move the carriage along the guide members;
- a ramp having an inboard end pivotably coupled to the carriage for pivotal movement about a fulcrum, a center of gravity of the ramp positioned on an outboard side of the fulcrum, the ramp movable between stowed and deployed positions; and
- a biasing assembly carried by the carriage and engaging the inboard end of the ramp on an inboard side of the fulcrum, the biasing assembly biasing the ramp to mitigate gravitational forces tending to pivot the ramp about the fulcrum.

Finally, the prior art of record, taken alone or in combination, does not teach or suggest:

A retractable ramp system for a vehicle having a floor, the retractable ramp system comprising:

- a frame including longitudinal guide members;
- a carriage extending laterally between and longitudinally moveable along the guide members;
- a motor operable to move the carriage along the guide members;
- a ramp pivotally coupled to the ramp carriage for movement therewith between stowed and deployed positions, the ramp including a substantially planar support surface and lips extending substantially orthogonally to the support surface and longitudinally along outer edges of the ramp, the support surface defining a cutout along an inboard end of the ramp; and
- a ramp flap having an inboard end pivotally coupled adjacent to the floor and an outboard end, the outboard end including a plurality of rollers that ride along the support surface during movement of the ramp platform between the stowed and deployed position, and that fall off of the support surface and drop into the cutout when the ramp platform reaches the deployed position, wherein the ramp flap provides a transition surface for movement between the support surface and the vehicle floor.

CONCLUSION

Allowance of the claims is respectfully requested. The undersigned is available for telephone consultation during normal business hours.

Respectfully submitted,



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